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CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE AGENCY
Office of Current Intelligence
23 July 1963

CURRENT INTELLIGENCE MEMORANDUM

SUBJECT: Background on US Security Guarantees for Israel

1. Following the conclusion of the Arab-Israeli Armistice Agreement in 1949 a "miniature" arms race developed in the Middle East. This caused the Western Powers (US-UK-France) to issue the Tripartite Declaration of 25 May 1950, stating that they would not tolerate any renewal of the Arab-Israeli War and that they would limit arms shipments to the area. The powers warned that they would take action both within and without the UN to prevent hostilities.

2. In August 1955 Secretary Dulles announced that the US would join in formal treaty arrangements with the Near Eastern Countries to prevent any attempt to alter Arab-Israeli boundaries by force--if Israel would agree to compensate the refugees with funds provided by the US. However, Nasir's arms deal with Czechoslovakia in September 1955 and Israeli refusal to agree to a settlement of the refugee problem negated Dulles' efforts.

3. Nasir's arms deal circumvented the Tripartite Declaration and led to a greatly expanded arms race. The Tripartite Declaration was effectively destroyed by the French-British collaboration with Israel in the Suez campaign against Egypt in October 1956.

4. Since 1954, Israel has pressed, with varying degrees of intensity, for a security guarantee with the United States. In March 1960, Ben *France* Gurion sought inclusion of a Four Power statement (UK-US-USSE) favoring the status quo in the Middle East in the abortive Eisenhower-Khrushchev Summit meeting. The US opposed such a statement.

5. At the present time, the armed forces of Israel are superior in quality to those of the Arab states, either individually or collectively. We expect this situation to continue for a considerable time to come. Political trends in the Arab world are such that meaningful military cooperation against Israel is highly unlikely in the foreseeable future.

6. Nevertheless, Israel repeatedly has sought US military aid to "restore the balance of power in the Middle East." However, it has been consistent US policy to have the Israelis depend on other Western sources--

State Dept. review completed

especially France--except for very limited deliveries of certain types of defensive weapons, such as recoilless rifles. Recently, the US agreed to provide "Hawk" surface-to-air missiles to Israel to increase its air defense capability.

7. A security guarantee to Egypt and Israel as part of, or as a sweetener for, an arms limitation proposal was worked up by the Department of State in early 1963. McCloy's discussion with Nasir on this subject did not prove very successful. The latter was unwilling to enter into an arrangement with the United States and/or Israel to limit his weapons development. Nasir said that a security guarantee would not be of much use to him, apparently because it would be regarded by other Arab states as making the UAR a US protectorate.

8. In the past year, Israel has again put heavy pressure on the US for a formal security guarantee, particularly since Tel Aviv has become aware of UAR progress--with the assistance of German scientists--in the development of surface-to-surface missiles. The Israelis have been uncooperative in revealing the extent of their nuclear program.

Implications for US

9. The ruling group in Israel sees substantial benefits in a relationship which would place it at the side of the US in the latter's worldwide confrontation with the Communist Bloc, in return for US reliance on Israel as a principal ally in the Middle East. However, such close ties with Israel would harm US commercial and strategic interests in the Arab states. We would probably lose the use of Wheelus in Libya; we would be greatly hampered in maintaining stability in Saudi Arabia and Jordan. The past few years' improvement in US-UAR relations would almost certainly be abruptly reversed.

10. Finally, a security guarantee would materially hamper US flexibility in the whole Arab-Israeli question. There would be increased likelihood of US involvement in local conflicts and greater Israeli intransigence in dealing with its Arab neighbors. At the same time, it would provide the Soviets with new opportunities to meddle in Arab affairs and might even lead to Soviet-US confrontation in the area. In particular, the UAR might well turn to the USSR for a countervailing guarantee.

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